The aim of the Presidential Academic Fellowship is to enable an early career academic to realise their ambitions, making some positive change within an area of teaching. My ambitions are within the digital humanities, but they extend beyond that. I do not believe we can continue to teach the ‘digital humanities’ for much longer. It is now the time for us to realise the importance of seeing the ‘digital humanities’ fostered in institutions over the past decade as a precursor to a new post-humanities academic practice that is not concerned with divisions between ambition and practice. We must do so to keep pace with the changing world, to maintain academic research as the most important and revered information our society possesses, and to enable new minds to take new bounds unfettered by arbitrary boundaries such as the humanities versus the sciences. If I was successful in securing a Presidential Fellowship I would use this once in a career opportunity to develop my already world-leading research into further publications (both monographs and peer-reviewed papers), host international conferences and develop world-leading teaching. The aim of this would be simple: to declare Manchester’s stance on digital humanities education as redefining and paradigm shaping. Growing beyond the digital humanities, this fellowship represents an opportunity to foster a true post-humanities department that seeks to revolutionise how we study our culture and society through techniques usually reserved to the sciences.

The first year of the fellowship provides a candidate with the opportunity to develop their research with no minimum teaching requirement. At present, my research has been published in five peer-reviewed, print journals on the topics of gender, representation and ontology, always with a focus on how digital practices enable new discoveries and understandings within these fields. I am currently in the process of refining my doctoral thesis into a publishable form with support from the Open Humanities press. In my first year at Manchester, I would finish this process as quickly as possible (ideally within the first semester) but I could not rest with this work existing only as a paper publication. My work, digital at its core, contains the seeds of digital games and web applications that explore the key concepts behind my work. If I secured the support the Fellowship would offer, I would take this opportunity to explore my theory through practice, completing these theoretical pieces, presenting them at exhibition spaces, enabling public engagement and feedback. This would not only generate a wealth of data that could be harvested for meaning and implication, it would expose an array of new thinkers to an innovative practice of theorising through digital design.

Although my research would be continued throughout the fellowship, I would relish the opportunity to teach in a variety of different subject areas. As your specialisms currently include digital cultural heritage and data science, it would be my objective to begin exposing digital humanities techniques, exploring texts through software and programmatic thinking, to wider groups of students. At Glasgow, my previous place of work, I offered my services to members of the MLitt creative writing course, developing interactive pieces of work with the students there. I would hope that this fused practice of creative work and programming work could be used as the model for a new form of teaching that sought to bring together digital creatives in a conductive manner.

Currently, my research and post-doctoral training is funded by the SGSAH whose support has enabled me to continue researching digital practice and develop my doctoral research. Moving forward, however, I aim to secure further world-leading grants such as the AHRC early career research grant. My hope is that this, along with my publication record, could contribute towards Manchester’s standing in the upcoming REF, and beyond.

I hope you will consider my attached CV and I look forward to discussing my application in more detail in person.